

reigned over France had it not been for the energy and acumen of his bastard half-brother, the Duke de Morny.

Apropos of the latter, Goncourt mentions that one day when Alphonse Daudet, who had been in the Duke's employment, was giving various particulars about him, Zola expressed a keen regret that he had not possessed this information in time to use it in "Son Excellence," which contains but a very imperfect sketch of Morny under the name of Marsy. In a discussion which ensued, Zola evinced great eagerness to put everything into his books — that is everything he learnt which might be germane to his subjects and likely to cast light upon them. On the whole, however, he was far less "personal" than Daudet. Both in "Son Excellence Eugene Rougon" and in his later novel, "Paris," although many of the characters suggested well-known people, almost every one of them was a blend, so to say, of three or four originals, whereas Daudet, sketching his characters from the life, often modified them so little that those who knew their Paris could not regard some of his books otherwise than as pillories.

The writing of "Son Excellence Eugene Rougon" proved a somewhat laborious task for Zola, the period selected for the story being largely antecedent to his

participation in news-
paper life, from which he had learnt so much
both politically
and socially. And his desire to be scrupulously
accurate in
all essential particulars led him to undertake a
variety of
fatiguing researches. Hard work, indeed
excessive work,
for he wrote regularly for the Russian review,
and penned
some Parisian correspondence every day for " Le
Semaphore "
of Marseilles, besides proceeding with his
novel, again re-
duced him to a nervous condition, and one
day, when he